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Title: Need to protect and preserve the backwaters of Kuttanad, Kerala.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Kuttanad region in Kerala is the major contributor of rice production in the state and despite located beneath sea level, the region is rich in rivers, lakes and streams that form the supply of water for consumption and agro-irrigation. The agrarian community of Kuttanad region is facing a complete rout in rice production and farming as rivers and lakes are chocked by a disastrous growth of water hyacinth and other invasive alien species. These plants have polluted the entire river system of upper Kuttanad region, turning the river water highly toxic by blocking penetration of sunlight. Resultantly, the water in Kuttanad region is unsuitable for agriculture and tourism industry is also severely affected as navigation of boats become di8fficult due to large growth of these plants. Any solution to this issue lies within the functional perimeter of the Ministries for Agriculture an Farmers Welfare, Drinking Water and Sanitation and Health and Family Welfare and I request an inter-ministerial committee be immediately formed to devise an action plan. I would further add that a vision plan to protect and preserve the backwaters of Kuttanad be declared a national priority by the authority of inland waterways.